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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/085,872	02/28/2002	Thomas A. Zdeblick	4002-2954/PC393.06	1196

7590

12/18/2003

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EXAMINER

BARRETT, THOMAS C

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3738

DATE MAILED: 12/18/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/085,872

Applicant(s)

ZDEBLICK ET AL.

Examiner

Thomas C. Barrett

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 52-71 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 55-57, 60 and 61 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 52-54, 58, 62, 65-67 and 69-71 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 59, 64 and 68 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 2. 6) ☐ Other: _____

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DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election without traverse of Species II, Sub-species ii in Paper No. 4 is acknowledged.

Claims 55-57 and 60-61 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected species, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in Paper No. 4.

Specification

The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

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Claims 52-53, 65-66, and 69-70 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Ray et al. (6,602,291 B1). Ray et al. discloses a method for inserting an implant into a disc space comprising: accessing a disc space, providing an implant having an upper and lower shell with a hydrogel core (24), reducing the height of the implant by dehydrating the core (col. 10 lines 57-58), inserting the implant in a dehydrated state, and rehydrating the implant (col. 4, lines 62-67). The process can be done through a sleeve (col. 18, lines 18-23). Please Note: Suggested language for further defining the invention includes "separate upper and lower shells" or "non-elastic shells". Inclusion of this or similar language should overcome the Ray et al. 102 rejection, however further consideration and search will be required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 54, 58, 62, 63, 67 and 71 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ray et al. (6,602,291 B1) as above in view of Houfburg et al. (6,171,339 B1). Ray et al. discloses a method for inserting an implant into a disc space using a sleeve however Ray et al. fails to disclose the preparing the implant location through a double barreled sleeve. Houfburg et al. teaches a method for inserting an implant into the anterior of a disc space (col. 7, line 12- col. 8, line 25) comprising:

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preparing the implant location (col. 8, lines 18-20) through a double barreled sleeve (12), which facilitates the ease and accuracy of placement of multiple spinal implants (col. 4, lines 13-15). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teaching of preparing a disc implant location through a double barreled sleeve, as taught by Houfburg et al., to a method for inserting an implant as per Ray et al., in order to facilitate the ease and accuracy of placement of multiple spinal implants.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 59, 64 and 68 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas C. Barrett whose telephone number is (703) 308-8295. The examiner can normally be reached Tuesday-Friday between 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M.

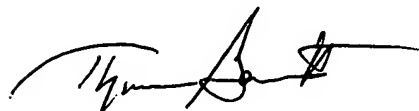
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Corrine McDermott can be reached on (703) 308-2111. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9306 for regular communications.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0858.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Barrett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas Barrett
December 14, 2003